

Application No. 09/918,117  
Amendment dated December 9, 2004  
Reply to Office Action of October 1, 2004

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIM:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

**Listing of the Claims:**

13. (Currently Amended) A hollow rack shaft which is formed cylindrically by bending a straight plate having wider and narrower width parts so that two sides of the plate are joined, wherein in a part of a surface of the plate a row of rack teeth is formed along a direction of an axis of the plate, and wherein:

said rack shaft ~~is provided with~~ includes a first area corresponding to said wider width part and at least one second area corresponding to said narrower width part; [[s]] ~~on both sides of said first area;~~

wherein, in said first area, the row of rack teeth and a semi-cylindrical part on a reverse side of the row of rack teeth are formed; and

in ~~each of~~ said second area[[s]], a respective complete cylindrical part coaxial with said semi-cylindrical part is formed and ~~at least one of the second areas respective complete cylindrical parts~~ has an outer diameter smaller than an outer diameter of the semi-cylindrical part in said first area.